



USAID | PHILIPPINES
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Office of Program Resources Management

(632) 552-9907

Wednesday, August 24, 2005

“USAID/Philippines does not vouch for the accuracy or the opinions of the articles provided in this press clipping service and assume no responsibility for their content. Please contact USAID/Philippines at usaidth@mozcom.com if you have any questions about USAID programs and projects.”

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #12 (SO12)

(Conflict Reduced in Mindanao and Other Areas Vulnerable to Violence)

Thanks to USAID, Lamitan now has improved port

LAMITAN, Basilan – Senior US government officials visited Basilan yesterday to turn over to local organizations the latest in their targeted investments to support peace and economic development in Central and Western Mindanao.

In Lamitan, the location of intense fighting between the military and the Abu Sayyaf in 2001, an expanded berthing facility and a new ro-ro (roll-on, roll-off) ramp will provide a gateway for local producers to ship their goods to the Mindanao mainland and also offer improved passenger services to locals and residents of neighboring towns.

The improved Lamitan port features a new ro-ro ramp, mooring facilities, and breasting dolphins.

This economic infrastructure project is one of about 40 mid-scale infrastructure projects that will be undertaken by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through partnerships between its Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program and local governments.

At the inauguration ceremony, Ambassador Darryl Johnson, US Embassy chargé d'affaires, underscored the importance of infrastructure in expanding economic opportunities to sustain peace in the region.

“We know that the ultimate responsibility for economic progress in this region rests with local leaders and the people themselves. We are truly pleased to be able to help those who are committed to peace in Mindanao, and who have the vision to see a brighter tomorrow,” Johnson said.

The inauguration was also attended by Jon Lindborg, USAID’s new mission director; Robert Wuertz, chief of USAID’s Office of Economic Development and Governance; Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar, Lamitan Mayor Roderick Furigay, community leaders and residents.

Johnson and Lindborg also took part in the turnover of computers with Internet access to the Basilan State College Laboratory High School (BSCLHS), located a few kilometers from the Lamitan port.

The 500 students of BSCLHS are among the 227,000 students in 212 schools across Mindanao now connected to the World Wide Web by GEM’s Computer Literacy and Internet Connection (CLIC) Program.

The CLIC program has worked closely with parent-teacher-community associations (PTCAs), community groups, and companies such as Intel Corp., Microsoft Corp., Innove Communications Inc., STI-Education Services Group, IBM and Cisco to make the initial investment and the cost of sustained operations affordable to even the poorest communities in Mindanao.

The PTCAs taking part in the CLIC program have pledged to cover the annual fees for future Internet subscriptions and take responsibility, jointly with school administrations, for the maintenance of the computers.

Over 400 schools are expected to be connected to the Internet by September 2006. – **With Roel Pareño**

(Source: Philippine Star, 8/24/05, page A22)